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ARIZONA STUDENT PERFORM ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE ON ACT COLLEGE ENTRANCE SCORES AND MORE STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN TESTING

PHOENIX (Wednesday, August 13, 2008) Arizona Schools Chief Tom Horne today announced that Arizona students again performed above the national average in the ACT college entrance test, with an average score of 21.9 compared to the national average of 21.1. In addition, the percentage of Arizona students taking this college entrance exam increased. A total of 11,602 students in the Arizona graduating class of 2008 took the ACT college admissions and placement exam. This total represents a 5% increase from last year and the states highest total ever.

The percentage of ACT tested Arizona high school graduates who met or surpassed the ACT's rigorous College Readiness Benchmarks, which indicate a student's readiness for college level coursework, was maintained or increased in every content area. In fact, Arizona students exceeded the national average for benchmark success in every subtest category. The ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks are scores on the individual subject tests that indicate the students are highly likely to earn a "C" or higher in the corresponding college course during their freshman year.

Horne stated: "The performance of Arizona students on the ACT college entrance exam, performing higher than the national average, is consistent with other data showing Arizona students above the national average. They perform above the national average on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the other major college entrance test, and on the *TerraNova* test, a national test given to all Arizona students grades 2-9."

In addition, Arizona's composite score for graduates improved this year for the third year in a row. This year's average score was 21.9 compared to 21.8 in 2007. This increase is all the more noteworthy when compared to the composite national average decline from 21.2 to 21.1 in the same reporting period. This performance continues a five year trend where Arizona students have exceeded the national average composite score on the ACT.

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